1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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283 now modern Queensland, this ratio is reversed and the chief material for pubic decorations or coverings is of vegetable fiber string.

415 *Women's Food Bags.*—The women's food bags (like the men's baskets) are so much a part of their ordinary equipment that the writer has placed [293] them in the category of things worn. The natives think of them as such.

The bags are of two major types. The norm of one is around twenty-one inches in length and twelve inches in width, while the other has a norm of eighteen by eight inches. The mesh of the larger bag is usually about one-quarter inch in diameter; the smaller has a mesh of about an eighth to a sixteenth of an inch. Each has a handle of from two to eight strands of fiber string tied to the rim of the bag. The handle is made long enough (sixteen inches) to fit over the forehead of the woman and allow the bag to lie against her back just below the neck.

286 Two sticks are put in the ground some few inches apart, according to the size of the bag desired, and the basal strand placed around them. The woman squats or sits while weaving. She works from left to right on one side of the sticks, forming the loop-meshes across the basal strand.[1] The finished side is taken from the sticks and put on the opposite side of the stick, so that the weaver now continues working from left to right to finish the other side of the bag. The ends are then sewn together. The basal strand may be removed, but it frequently remains in the bag.

415 These bags are used by the women to transport cycad nuts, yams, larger lily bulbs, or any other vegetable or animal food brought to camp by them. Men do not use this type of container.

[531] Rarely, to decorate the bags, bands of darker and lighter fiber string are alternated at intervals of about three-quarters of an inch.

415 *Spirit Bags.*—Throughout northeastern Arnhem Land the medicine men
286 use a small bag made by the simple loop technique of the woman's food bag.
293 Ordinarily the string used is extremely fine and the mesh about an eighth-inch in diameter. The bag itself is about four to six inches in diameter, and, when stuffed with native cord and tied at the top with vegetable fiber string, is round in shape. It is manufactured exactly as is a woman's food bag. A string handle about sixteen inches long is attached at its neck and worn as a head circlet so that the bag usually reposes over the ear. At times it is worn around the medicine man's neck.

[531] The bag may be decorated with alternating bands of dark and light fiber,
415 or it may have a series of geometrical designs in red, yellow, white, and black painted upon it. Frequently it is also covered with birds' down.
293 At other times the whole bag is completely covered with red ocher, with

[1] "The circular basal strand is identical with the stirrup of the European netter, and is either fixed like it to some circular support or else held in position by passing the leg, big toe, etc., through it: it usually remains as it is, part and parcel of the manufactured article." W. E. Roth, *North Queensland Ethnological Bulletin*, Brisbane, 1901, No. 1, page 12.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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no other ornamentation upon it. The red ocher is not only for decoration, but it adds spirit "power" to the receptacle.

East of the Goyder River the bag is used exclusively by the medicine man, whose spirit helpers reside in it. West of the Goyder River it is also worn by anyone who so desires for good luck in hunting. Here also it is held in the teeth during a fight to add magical powers and bravery to the fighter.

Fighting "Tie."—Sometimes a "tie" is carried in the mouth to gain power during a fight. The tie is made by the same technique as the spirit bag. It is made of coarse vegetable fiber string, is flat, about eighteen inches long and three inches wide, and has a fiber string handle which allows the owner to wear it around his neck when not in use. It has ornamental value, although it is never decorated except with alternating bands of dark and light fiber.

The netting stitch is not used in the making of bags or the tie in this area as it is in Queensland.

Forehead Bands.—This article of ornamentation is made of small thread-like string with a mesh that is a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. Its length and width correspond to the size of the wearer's forehead. It is worn only by males. Each end of the band has a string attached to it for tying at the back of the head. The bands are used in the Gunabibi, Ulmark, and Djungguan ceremonies. They are covered with a solid layer of white pipe clay or red ocher. Sometimes bands are made of paper bark tied with fiber string and painted with red ocher or white clay.

Women's and Children's "Harness."—This curious body ornament used by women and small children looks, when worn, much like a harness used for hitching horses to a carriage. It is composed of one continuous strand of twelve to eighteen strings of two-ply vegetable fiber. The string is formed into two large equal loops which are joined by wrapping with fiber string for a distance of about ten inches. Each loop is then wrapped separately for from two to five inches from both sides of the joint. The wrapped sections are usually painted with alternating white and red or yellow and red bands of paint. The unwrapped string frequently is covered with red ocher.

Women and children wear the harness during ceremonies. The wrapped portion falls down the middle of the back; the arms are slipped through the loops which are made to cross below the breast.

Bugle-grass Necklace.—The bright straw-yellow bugle grass is cut into small beads about one-half inch in length and strung on a thin vegetable fiber string. The string is then looped back and forth to form about eighteen lengths of ten inches each. To each of the two ends of the bunch of loops is attached a single fiber string. The beads are worn against the throat by tying the fiber strings at the back of the wearer's neck. Men, women, and children wear these ornaments. The bright yellow is particularly effective in contrast with the gleaming black skin of the aborigines.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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the mangel type, but only about half of the wood at the place where the incision is made is cut away. Fiber string and resin form the hafting materials.

The cylindrical type of spear-thrower is not a hunting weapon, and is supposed to be carried only by old men, although young men have been observed using it. Its chief use is ceremonial. The leader of a totemic dance frequently directs the dances with it, using it as a baton as he keeps time to the rhythm. Sometimes this spear-thrower baton has red parrot feathers tied to the end of each piece of human hair string.

Spears

The spears possessed by the Murngin may be divided into four main types, according to the variety of heads possessed by each. They are: (1) stone, (2) wooden, (3) sting-ray prong, and (4) in the present day, iron.[2] The writer has chosen the above classification by material because each has a separate technique for its manufacture and because a classification by function would not divide the spears into different varieties, for all of them, with the exception of the third, are used in both fighting and hunting. Spears are used only by men and boys, never by women.

A. *Stone-pointed Spears.*—The length of the flaked-stone spear head has a norm of six inches and a variation of from three and a half to seven and a half inches. Its diameter at the upper end (widest part) is two inches, with a variation of from one and one-half to three inches. Some of the spear heads are serrated along the edges, but the majority are not. (The chipping technique is not applied to stone spear heads in this area, and is found only among the tribes centering around the Kimberley region of West Australia.) The peoples of the coastal plain obtain all their spear heads by trading with the table-land peoples in the interior.

The wooden shaft, usually of eucalyptus (but also of canes and mangrove wood), is normally about six feet long, and varies from five feet nine inches to nine feet in length. The diameter of the shaft is three-quarters of an inch. Its distal end is split in the center for about four to five inches to allow the stone head to be inserted. The stone and wood are then joined by a wrapping of fiber string and a secondary coating of native beeswax. The proximal end has a small hole bored in it. This serves as an articulation socket for the peg of the spear-thrower. For a distance of three to four inches each side of the hole, the shaft is wrapped with fiber string and coated with ironwood cement to prevent splitting.

All the shafts are smeared with red ocher, and eighteen inches of the distal ends is painted with white clay. The beeswax is likewise covered with pipe clay. Painting is for decoration only, and has no utilitarian or magical purpose.

B. *Wooden-headed Spears.*—Spears with wooden heads may be classified

[2] Not discussed here, for the reason that they form an exotic element in the culture.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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287 of a cone and is about one and a half to four inches long. It flares out at
292 the feather end, where it has a diameter of about three inches. The hafting material is always painted.

The diameter of the bunch of feathers has two norms, according to the species of birds' feathers used. The first norm ranges around fourteen to sixteen inches, and the second from twenty-two to twenty-six inches. The feathers of the former are emu, black and white cockatoo, black goose, native companion, ibis, egret, jabiru and heron. The latter is always composed of emu tail feathers. Sometimes, instead of being hafted to a pin, the feathers are attached to a loop of string large enough to go around the wearer's head and allow the headdress to hang down the back of his neck and body. The pin type is used in the Gunabibi ceremony, both for making the "head of Yermerlindi," the Great Father Snake, and for the male dancers. The latter wear the feathers attached to the peak of a "dunce cap."

The kurt kurt type of headdress has the same general shape as the Gunabibi type, except that the feathers are spread out fanwise, and the beeswax, which is usually used instead of resin, is flattened instead of conical. The pin is usually a sting-ray prong, since the barb on this adheres [237] to the wearer's hair more easily than wood or bone, but sticks and bones are sometimes used. The pin is about one to two inches long, the wax about three-quarters of an inch in length. The feather part of the headdress has two norms, one of which is eight inches and the other twelve. The smaller one is composed of crests of the sulphur-crested cockatoo, the twelve-inch one from the wings or tail of an emu. The kurt kurt is worn in such a manner that the fanlike feathers form a brim resembling that of a modern cap or eye shade.

287 The feather fan is made the same way as the kurt kurt headdress except
293 that stiff wing feathers of the jabiru or black goose are used instead of the softer feathers of the kurt kurt. A fan is used when making a fire or as a fly swatter. Often the lower wings are cut from the carcass of the jabiru or black goose and used as fans without further treatment.

778 *Rangas* (*Totemic Emblems*).—Technically the totemic emblems divide into two main classes. The fundamental structure of each is governed by the materials of which it is made. The first type is the wrapped paperbark form, and the second the carved wooden type. An occasional third type is the stone ranga. Each may have additions to its main structure, but basically there is no variation. Still another type of ranga is formed when mythical paintings are placed on an article of the material culture which is the totem of the group (stone axe, bark boat, et cetera).

Designs are painted on all rangas.[5]

[5] The designs used and their meanings will not be discussed here, since we are considering only the technological processes.

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[811
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Two bark paintings, a ceremonial message stick[19] and a staff,[20] used in the *karawak* totemic rituals, were made by the Yirrkalla aborigines.

The central design on Pl. 115E is the totemic hollow tree at Djerakoi, Cape Shield, with *karawak*, the night-bird, sitting on top of it. The black semicircles at *a*, *a*, and *b*, *b*, and similar designs on the trunk, are openings in the hollow tree, the home of the opossum, *marungo*. At dusk the opossum leaves the opening, *a*, climbs the tree and, entering *b*, keeps *karawak* company during the hours of darkness. At the first sign of dawn the opossum leaves *karawak* and, descending the trunk, enters the hole *a* and goes to sleep. On the right is the opossum ascending, and on the left, descending. The short white marks on the trunk of the tree are the scratches made by the claws of the opossum as he climbs up and down. The meandering lines on panels *c*, *c*, *c*, *c*, *c*, *c*, indicate marks in the mud at the base of the totemic tree made by the opossum, *marungo*, the ghost crabs, *gunjun*, and an unidentified lizard, *gainuerena*. In some undetermined way these three creatures are associated in the myths.

On Pl. 115B the tall vertical figure in the middle of the painting is the hollow totemic tree at Djerakoi on which *karawak* seated himself to talk to the opossum. Flying round *karawak* are five cicadas. A number of opossums are shown ascending the tree after dark and descending when dawn breaks. The short white lines indicate the scratches made on the tree by their claws. The upper six panels of wavy lines, *a*, *a*, *a*, *a*, *a*, *a*, represent the footmarks of the opossums as they walked round the totemic tree. The circles at the corners of the square, *b*, are the holes of the crabs, *gunjun*, which followed the opossum to the tree, and the lines joining the circles are the tracks made in the sand by the crabs as they walked from one hole to another.[21] In the squares, *c*, on the lower left are four dingoes. The surrounding designs are the paths of the dingoes, and the dots are their tracks.

The Dugongs, Merinjunga

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Two bark paintings deal with the fragment of a myth about some mythical dugongs (*Dugong australis*) which once lived at Bartu, near Cape Wilberforce. One of the dugongs was killed by a mythical man, *Oramula*.

In Pl. 116C the large dugong, *merinjunga*, is dead. The broken lines on his head are the maggots crawling from his body, and the cross-hatched bands, the strips of meat, as they are cut from the animals by the aborigines. There was no explanation of the cross-hatched background. Interpretation made by F. D. McCarthy.

Plate 116A shows a male and a female dugong, *merinjunga*, at Gongora, near Cape Wilberforce. The cross-hatched panels leading from their heads represent submarine grass, the food of the dugongs. The vertical panels, *a*, symbolize the ripples on the water and the bubbles coming to the surface as the creatures feed on the sea bottom.

19. Fig. 65A, B. 20. Pl. 134E.
21. Myth, p. 298, and design of the crabs, *gunjun*, on bark painting, Pl. 115F.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

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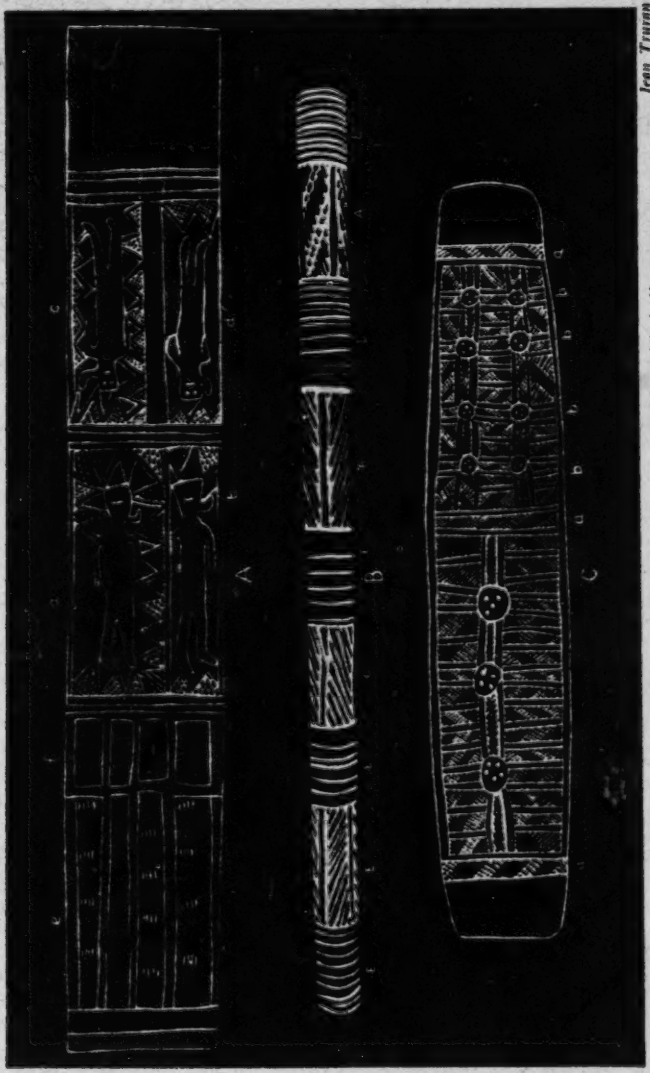

Jean Traran

PLATE 128. Painted pipes and ceremonial object, Yirrkalla

A The four jiridja men of Melville Bay B The man, Tualpa, and the sacred tree C The geese, warumaiji

283 made on the same principle. Three men each take a length of fibre. They twist them and pass them one to another to form a single length of rope. As the rope lengthens it is passed over the limb of a tree and held taut by a fourth man.

286 415 [237] [531] Woven pandanus dilly-bags are pleasing and effective examples of artistic workmanship. Sacred bags are small, but beautifully woven, and are adorned with parrot feathers or fur and sometimes totemically painted. Women make most of them and some are so closely woven that they hold water. The majority, however, are large work bags which hang down their backs and are used to carry yams, shells, roots, and small animals. Another bag is made from string, is similar to the well-known onion bag, and will hold thirty or forty pounds of yams.

292 285 293 [513] The curious 'nganmara' is peculiar to Arnhem Land. It is a house, an umbrella, a garment, a shelter from the wind and rain, a mat on which to sleep, and it is conveniently carried under the arm. This conical straw umbrella mat is woven from pandanus palm; it is circular, with an apex two feet high, and gives some slight protection from sun, wind, or rain. When the nganmara is thrown open on the ground a woman and child can be completely hidden under it. I first saw an nganmara when I was on the King River, where the woman who had it was hunting with her friends. When I asked her to show me the mat under her arm, she calmly handed me the nganmara, which was her only clothing. Knowing that strangers were in the camp, some of the women had politely donned leafy twigs, but this lady relied on her nganmara and deftly swung it from under her arm.

276 [237] In west Arnhem Land, tobacco pipes are made from large crab claws. More elaborate pipes are also made by boring the pithy centre from a soft jungle shrub and plugging